

METHOD OF OPERATING A GAMING MACHINE

WITH A TICKET PRINTER

Cross-reference to Related Application

This application is based on Provisional Application, Serial No. 60/259,999, filed January 5, 2001, entitled "Method of Operating a Gaming machine with a Ticket Printer."

This application relates to a method of operating a gaming machine with a printer and more particularly to a method of operating a gaming machine with a printer that presents to the player a keno ticket, a lottery ticket, a sweepstakes ticket, an entry into a prize contest, a redeemable coupon or other valuable printed award whenever the player achieves a predetermined outcome on the gaming machine or as a random occurrence. Alternatively, whenever the player achieves a predetermined outcome on the gaming machine or as a random occurrence, the player can be connected through the gaming machine to the world wide web to a web site at which place the player may select from an award shown to the player on the web site.

Background of the Invention

1
2 In the typical gaming casino, there are many types of
3 gaming machines which generally fall into the categories of
4 slot machines, video poker machines, video keno machines and
5 other assorted mechanical or electronic gaming machines. Each
6 of these games works on the general principle of the player
7 making a wager to play the gaming machine, the player activat-
8 ing the gaming machine and the gaming machine displaying to
9 the player the outcome of the game displayed on the gaming
10 machine.

11 Some of the gaming machines are simply games of chance
12 such as a slot machine. When playing the typical slot
13 machine, the player first makes a wager and then the player
14 activates the slot machine by pulling a handle or pressing a
15 button. The reels of the slot machine spin and, when the
16 reels stop spinning, the outcome is displayed to the player.
17 Winning combinations result in a payout to the player based on
18 the amount of the player's wager.

19 Another game of chance is a video keno machine. The
20 player makes a wager, selects one or more numbers from a
21 display of typically eighty numbers and presses a button to
22 activate the play of the video keno machine. The computer

1 controls of the keno machine select a group of numbers,
2 typically twenty, and the player receives an award whenever
3 some or all of the numbers selected by the player match the
4 numbers selected by the computer controls.

5 Another game of chance is video draw poker. After making
6 a wager, the player is dealt five cards face up. The player
7 selects which cards, if any, the player wishes to hold, the
8 unheld cards are discarded and replacement cards are dealt for
9 the discarded cards. The final five card hand is analyzed to
10 determine its poker hand ranking and the player is paid for
11 winning poker hand rankings based on the amount of the
12 player's wager. A pay table is displayed to the player
13 showing the amounts that the player can win based on the poker
14 hand ranking achieved by the player and the amount wagered by
15 the player.

16 There are also other electronic casino gaming machines
17 that have been introduced into gaming casinos in recent years
18 that use "secondary events" to provide additional payouts to
19 the player. In a typical secondary event game, the player
20 first achieves some outcome on the first screen or level of
21 the electronic gaming machine. This first level outcome that
22 occurs during the play of the basic electronic casino game
23 qualifies the player to play a secondary event where the

1 player engages in another chance event to determined the
2 amount to be won by the player.

3 One of the most popular secondary event games was "Wheel
4 of Gold" marketed by Anchor Gaming Company. This game used a
5 three reel slot machine as the first event. If the player
6 lined up a "Spin" symbol on the pay line of the third reel,
7 this qualified the player to go on to the secondary event. In
8 the secondary event in "Wheel of Gold", a rotating wheel
9 similar to a Big Six Wheel is spun by the player who then
10 receives the payout shown on the pay line when the wheel stops
11 rotating.

12 Other secondary event games have followed. On the
13 ODYSSEY multi-game machine marketed by Silicon Gaming Company,
14 there is a secondary event game known as "Fort Knox" used in
15 connection with a reel slot machine game. Each time the
16 player spins the reels of the slot machine, a random number
17 between 0 and 9 is selected. The random number selected is
18 compared to a pre-established ten digit "code number" and when
19 the player has successfully matched all ten digits of the code
20 number, the player is taken to a secondary event screen in
21 which the player selects one of three doors behind which is a
22 payout amount awarded to the player.

23 Secondary event games have been added to video poker

1 games also. In a game known as "Million Coin Scratch Poker"
 2 marketed by Boyd Gaming Group, the primary event game is a
 3 standard video draw poker game. Whenever the player achieves
 4 a flush in the primary event video poker game, the player is
 5 paid for achieving a flush and then is taken to a second
 6 screen in which the secondary event game is displayed. The
 7 secondary event game involves the player selecting five cards
 8 from a fifty-two card face down display, in effect, the player
 9 is playing a hand of five card stud poker. The player wins
 10 payouts depending on whether the player achieves particular
 11 poker hands during this secondary event game of five card stud
 12 poker.

13 Over the years, gaming establishments have also run
 14 promotions that encourage casino play. It is known to award
 15 the player special prizes, in addition to the regular gaming
 16 machine payout, whenever the player achieves certain winning
 17 combinations during the play of the gaming machine. For
 18 example, casinos have been known to award the player a warm-up
 19 jacket with the casino's logo whenever the player achieves a
 20 Royal Flush while playing video poker, in addition to the
 21 regular monetary award. Gaming establishments have also
 22 awarded players with entries into a raffle or drawing for
 23 prizes. Players earn a raffle or drawing ticket each time the

1 player achieves a certain size win on a gaming machine, such
2 as a \$25 win whenever a player is playing a 25¢ gaming
3 machine. The players fill out the raffle or drawing ticket
4 and periodically, such as once each day, a ticket is drawn and
5 the lucky player wins a new car.

6 Many gaming establishment operate "player's clubs" and
7 issue ID cards to the players. Each gaming machine in the
8 establishment is outfitted with player tracking electronics
9 and the player inserts his ID card into a slot provided in the
10 gaming machine. The gaming machine computer controls then
11 track the wagering activity of the player and the player
12 accumulates points to his player account based on the amount
13 wagered by the player or the amount won by the player during
14 the play of the gaming machine. The points accumulated by the
15 player are redeemable for cash or prizes offered at the award
16 center and can even be redeemed for meals and room charges at
17 the gaming establishment.

18 None of the known electronic gaming machines interact in
19 any way with any of the live casino games that are played in
20 the gaming casino and that are available for play by gaming
21 customers in the jurisdiction of the gaming casino. Many
22 gaming casinos offer live keno games and many gaming casinos
23 are located in gaming jurisdictions that also have state-run

1 lotteries. There is a need in the casino gaming business for
2 new and creative electronic casino games to capture the
3 interest of the gaming patron and stimulate additional casino
4 play.

5 None of the known gaming machines interact with the world
6 wide web in any way and one of the ways that can be used to
7 attract and keep players for gaming machines would be to have
8 each gaming machine interact with the world wide web on a real
9 time basis.

10 It is an object of the present invention to provide an
11 interaction between the electronic gaming machines and other
12 forms of wagering that may be available to the gaming patron
13 in the jurisdiction of the gaming casino.

14 It is a further object of the present invention to
15 utilize the electronic gaming machine to dispense awards to
16 the player in the form of a keno ticket, a lottery ticket, a
17 sweepstakes ticket, an entry into a prize contest, a redeem-
18 able coupon or other valuable printed award.

19 It is a further object of the present invention to
20 utilize the electronic gaming machine to provide a real time
21 connection to the world wide web while the player is playing
22 the gaming machine.

23 It is a feature of the present invention to provide an

1 electronic gaming machine that also includes a printer device
2 which would print out and make available to the player a keno
3 ticket or a lottery ticket that rewards the player with a
4 entry into a live keno game or a lottery drawing. The player
5 would receive the keno ticket or lottery ticket whenever the
6 player achieves a predetermined combination of playing cards,
7 keno number, slot symbols or the like during the play of the
8 electronic gaming machine or on a random basis determined by
9 the gaming machine. It is anticipated that the award of the
10 keno ticket or lottery ticket would be in addition to any
11 other award the player may have won on the electronic gaming
12 machine.

13 It is a further feature of the present invention to
14 provide an electronic gaming machine that also includes a
15 printer device which would print out and make available to the
16 player a sweepstakes ticket, an entry into a prize contest, a
17 redeemable coupon or other valuable printed award that can be
18 redeemed by the player at the gaming establishment.

19 It is a further feature of the present invention to
20 provide an electronic gaming machine with real time world wide
21 web access so that the player can redeem any awards that the
22 player earned while playing the gaming machine. The gaming
23 machine could access the world wide web in any suitable

1 manner, such as by telephone line, cable modem or satellite.
 2 Prize award sites on the world wide web could be accessed by
 3 the player and the player could select his award from the
 4 prize award site while still sitting at the gaming machine.

5 It is an advantage of the present invention that the
 6 player will receive the opportunity to participate in a live
 7 keno game or a lottery game while at the same time the player
 8 is playing an electronic gaming machine. This will encourage
 9 the play of both the electronic gaming machines and the live
 10 keno games or lottery games and thus blend together the
 11 customers who normally play electronic gaming machines with
 12 live keno games and lottery games.

13 It is a further advantage of the present invention that
 14 the player can instantly receive, during the play of the
 15 gaming machine and from a printer mounted in the gaming
 16 machine, a sweepstakes ticket, an entry into a prize contest,
 17 a redeemable coupon or other valuable printed award without
 18 having to wait for the casino personnel to come by and make
 19 such an award to the player.

20 It is a further advantage of the present invention that
 21 the player can instantly redeem any prize award that the
 22 player has earned during the play of the gaming machine and a
 23 very large prize pool could be used, not limited to the

1 storage space available on site at the gaming casino.

2 Other objects, features and advantages of the present
3 invention will become apparent from a consideration of the
4 following detailed description.

5

6

Summary of the Invention

7 The present invention comprises the method of operating a
8 gaming machine to include the award of a keno ticket or
9 lottery ticket when the player achieves a predetermined
10 combination of playing cards or slot symbols on the gaming
11 machine or on a random basis determined by the gaming machine.

12 In the method of operation, the player plays a video poker
13 gaming machine or a slot machine in the conventional manner.
14 During the play of the gaming machine, the player may achieve
15 certain predetermined combinations of playing cards (during
16 the play of video poker) or slot symbols (during the play of a
17 slot machine). When the player achieves such a combination,
18 the computer controls of the gaming machine will cause a
19 printer located in the gaming machine to print out a keno
20 ticket or a lottery ticket which would then allow the partici-
21 pate in an upcoming live keno game or lottery drawing.
22 Alternatively, the printer would print out for the player a

1 sweepstakes ticket, an entry into a prize contest, a redeem-
2 able coupon or other valuable printed award.

3 In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the
4 player would receive the keno ticket, the lottery ticket, the
5 sweepstakes ticket, an entry into a prize contest, a redeem-
6 able coupon or other valuable printed award in addition to any
7 award that the player would have been entitled for achieving
8 the combination of playing cards or slot symbols.

9 In another preferred embodiment of the present invention,
10 the gaming machine could be configured to have real time
11 access to the world wide web. Whenever the player earns a
12 prize award from playing the gaming machine, the player could
13 access a variety of gaming award sites located on the world
14 wide web while the player is still seated at the gaming
15 machine. The player can then redeem his prize award from a
16 large group of prizes that can be displayed to the player on
17 the video screen of the gaming machine.

18

19 **Brief Description of the Drawings**

20 Figure 1 shows a gaming machine configured to operate the
21 method of the present invention.

22

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

The method of operation of the gaming machine of the present invention commences with a player making a wager and playing a conventional electronic gaming machine. Any suitable electronic gaming machine can be used for the play of this basic game, such as a video poker machine or a slot machine. During the play of the gaming machine, the player will achieve winning and losing occurrences as is conventional. The player will be paid for winning occurrences and lose his wager for losing occurrences as is conventional.

Also, during the play of the video slot machine, the player will achieve certain combinations of playing cards or slot symbols that will award the player with an additional payout of a keno ticket or a lottery ticket. For example, the player could achieve a combination of symbols on a pay line of the video slot machine for which the player wins a "Keno Ticket" or a "Lottery Ticket". In one embodiment, the player could line up three "ticket" symbols which would earn the player such a prize award. Alternatively, the award of the keno ticket or the lottery ticket could be as an additional award to a large jackpot for achieving "Three 7's". Any suitable combination of symbols could be used. Alternatively,

1 the player could simply be presented with a prize award on a
2 random basis during the play of the gaming machine, regardless
3 of whether the player has won or lost on a particular play of
4 the game.

5 In another embodiment of the present invention, the
6 player could be playing video poker. Whenever the player
7 achieved a predetermined arrangement of playing cards, the
8 player would be awarded with a keno ticket or a lottery
9 ticket. For example, the player could win such a ticket for
10 achieving a Royal Flush and the ticket would be awarded in
11 addition to whatever payout the player would be entitled for
12 the Royal Flush. Alternatively, the player could be awarded a
13 keno ticket or a lottery ticket for being dealt a particularly
14 poor starting hand, such as five cards with nothing higher
15 than a Ten (with no pairs and not a Straight or a Flush). The
16 player could be awarded such a ticket as a consolation award
17 for having such a poor hand. Again the player could win a
18 prize award on a random basis having nothing to with the
19 outcome of the video poker game.

20 Figure 1 shows generally at 10 a gaming machine upon
21 which the method of the present invention can be carried out.

22 The gaming machine 10 includes a video screen display 20 on
23 which are shown the playing cards that will be used during the

1 the player to effect the draw step of the method of play as
2 desired should the player prefer to use the button panel 40
3 instead of the DRAW touch screen location 47 on the video
4 screen display 20. A plurality of HOLD buttons 48 are also
5 provided to allow the player to select which cards the player
6 wishes to hold should the player prefer to use the button
7 panel instead of the card touch screen locations on the video
8 screen display 20. If desired, a button may be added to the
9 button panel 40 to allow the player to select the amount to be
10 wagered.

11 The gaming machine 10 also includes a coin head 50 to
12 allow the player to insert coins or gaming tokens as wagers to
13 allow play of the gaming machine 10. A bill acceptor slot 52
14 is also provided on the gaming machine 10. In order to accrue
15 credits that may be used to play the gaming machine 10, the
16 player inserts paper currency or other suitable script or
17 gaming coupons into the bill acceptor slot 52 behind which, on
18 the interior of the gaming machine 10, is mounted a bill
19 acceptor which takes in and validates the currency. The
20 monetary value of the inserted currency is then applied to the
21 credit meter 22, the credits on which the player may use to
22 play the gaming machine.

23 The gaming machine 10 also includes a ticket printer (not

1 shown) of any suitable technology. The ticket printer is
2 mounted on the interior of the gaming machine and the ticket
3 printer slot 70 allows the ticket printer to eject a ticket
4 for accessibility by the player.

5 The gaming machine 10 is operated by conventional
6 computer controls which are mounted on the interior of the
7 gaming machine. Any other conventional and suitable equipment
8 can be included in the gaming machine 10.

9 The gaming machine of the present invention can be used
10 for electronic video poker games designed to be played by
11 having a first poker hand representing a first pay line
12 displayed to a player on the video screen 22. By manipulating
13 the buttons on the gaming device or by using conventional
14 touch screen technology, the player selects which cards he
15 wishes to play and which cards he wishes to discard. Replace-
16 ment cards are then displayed for the discarded cards and the
17 outcome of the play of the hand is determined.

18 Alternatively, instead of displaying a video poker game,
19 the video screen display 22 can be configured through the
20 computer controls to display one or more lines of symbols so
21 that a video slot machine game may be played on the gaming
22 machine 10. The touch screen locations and the buttons on the
23 button panel are configured in a conventional manner to allow

1 the player to play the gaming machine as a slot machine.

2 Whenever the player wins a keno ticket or a lottery
3 ticket, the player uses that ticket to participate in either a
4 keno game or a lottery game, respectively.

5 For example, with regard to the keno ticket, the player
6 could be awarded a keno ticket that has one or more keno
7 numbers that have been selected for the player by the computer
8 controls of the gaming machine 10. The keno ticket would be
9 associated with a particular keno game and the player would
10 win or lose on the keno ticket based on the outcome of the
11 keno numbers selected during the associated keno game.

12 Preferably, the keno game would be a live keno game
13 conducted on the premises of the same gaming establishment at
14 which the player is playing the electronic gaming machine.
15 When the player achieves a "keno ticket" combination on the
16 gaming machine that the player is playing, the printer would
17 present the keno ticket to the player by dispensing the keno
18 ticket through the printer slot 70 of the gaming machine. The
19 player could participate in the keno game for which the keno
20 ticket is associated by watching the keno game outcome as it
21 is displayed on the keno number boards located throughout the
22 gaming establishment as is conventional. If the player has a
23 winning keno ticket, the player could redeem the winning keno

1 ticket at the cashier's station in the keno lounge or at a
2 suitable casino cage location in the gaming establishment.

3 Alternatively, when the player wins a keno ticket award,
4 the gaming machine 10 can be configured to provide a location
5 on the video screen display 20 at which the player can select
6 the keno numbers which the player wishes to play on his keno
7 ticket award. For example, a conventional keno layout of
8 eighty numbers can be shown to the player on the video screen
9 display 20 and the player can select one or more numbers to be
10 played on the keno ticket award. The selection of numbers can
11 be done by using touch screen technology or in any other
12 suitable manner. Once the player has selected his numbers,
13 the ticket printer is activated and the keno ticket award is
14 printed and dispensed to the player through ticket printer
15 slot 70.

16 Alternatively, the player can merely press a touch screen
17 location denominated "Quick Pick" and the computer controls of
18 the gaming machine will randomly select the keno numbers which
19 the player will play on the keno ticket award.

20 If the video monitor used for the video screen display
21 has sufficient screen area, the live keno game occurring in
22 the gaming establishment can be shown to the player in real
23 time while the player is playing the video gaming machine.

1 the computer controls of the gaming machine 10. The lottery
2 ticket would be associated with a particular lottery game and
3 the player would win or lose on the lottery ticket based on
4 the outcome of the lottery numbers selected during the
5 associated lottery game.

6 Preferably, the lottery game would be one that was
7 conducted either on the premises of the same gaming establish-
8 ment at which the player is playing the electronic gaming
9 machine or as part of the daily or weekly lottery drawing that
10 is conducted in the state in which the gaming establishment is
11 located. When the player achieves a "lottery ticket" combina-
12 tion on the gaming machine that the player is playing, the
13 printer would present the lottery ticket to the player by
14 dispensing the lottery ticket through the printer slot 70 of
15 the gaming machine. The player could participate in the
16 lottery game for which the lottery ticket is associated by
17 comparing the numbers on the lottery ticket with the lottery
18 numbers drawn during the daily or weekly lottery drawing. If
19 the player has a winning lottery ticket, the player could
20 redeem the winning lottery ticket in the same manner that the
21 player would redeem a winning lottery ticket that the player
22 had purchased directly, rather than having won the lottery
23 ticket playing a gaming machine.

1 In the embodiment of the present invention in which the
2 player is awarded a lottery ticket instead of a keno ticket,
3 the same various gaming machine configurations may be used.
4 The gaming machine can be configured so that the player can
5 select his lottery numbers, either before he wins a lottery
6 ticket award or at the time the player wins a lottery ticket
7 award. Alternatively, the gaming machine can be configured to
8 allow the player to merely press a "Quick Pick" location and
9 have the gaming machine randomly select the lottery numbers to
10 be used on the lottery ticket awarded to the player.

11 In another embodiment of the present invention, the
12 ticket printer of the present invention can be used to print
13 award coupons for the player in formats other than keno
14 tickets or lottery tickets. Whenever the player achieves
15 combination of symbols on a slot machine or a combination of
16 playing cards on a video poker game that entitles the player
17 to an award, the computer controls of the gaming machine cause
18 the ticket printer to print an award coupon to the player.
19 The combination of symbols or combination of playing cards can
20 be either a winning or losing combination on the gaming
21 machine.

22 In one example, whenever the player achieves a Four-of-a-
23 Kind while playing video poker, the player could also win an

1 award coupon dispensed by the ticket printer. The award
2 coupon could be a comp for a free meal, such as a buffet, at
3 the gaming establishment. Or the award coupon could be a
4 prize ticket redeemable for merchandise at a prize booth or in
5 the gift shop of the gaming establishment. The award could a
6 coupon entitling the player to a free or reduced fee entry
7 into a slot tournament or a video poker tournament to be
8 conducted on the premises of the gaming establishment.

9 Any suitable award scheme could be used as long as the
10 award coupon or ticket can be dispensed by the ticket printer
11 of the gaming machine.

12 In another alternative embodiment of the present inven-
13 tion, the gaming machine could be configured to have real time
14 access to the world wide web. Each gaming machine in the
15 gaming casino can be provided with an internal modem or a
16 network card so that the gaming machine would have real time
17 access to the world wide web. This access could be by means
18 of a telephone connection or by means of a cable modem
19 connection. Alternatively, the gaming machine could be
20 connected by means of a LAN or a WAN in any suitable conven-
21 tional manner.

22 Whenever the player earns a prize award from playing the
23 gaming machine, the player could access a variety of gaming

1 award sites located on the world wide web while the player is
2 still seated at the gaming machine. The gaming casino being
3 visited by the player could have its own prize award redemp-
4 tion site on the world wide web and the redemption site could
5 have a variety of prize awards that are available to the
6 player. The redemption site could have a plurality of pages
7 with each page devoted to various categories of prizes that
8 would appeal to different players. Additionally, the gaming
9 machine could be configured to access world wide sites that
10 are not operated by the gaming casino, but rather have
11 affiliated with the gaming casino to provide prize award
12 redemption services to the gaming casino.

13 The player can then redeem his prize award from a large
14 group of prizes that can be displayed to the player on the
15 video screen of the gaming machine. Some of the prize awards
16 can be maintained on the premises of the gaming casino and be
17 immediately available to the player. Other prizes can be
18 shipped or sent to the player at his mailing address which
19 would make receipt of the prize very convenient for the
20 player.

21 Since the video screen display would be right there in
22 front of the player, the review and selection of the prize
23 award could not be more convenient. The player never has to

1 leave his position at the gaming machine and the player can
2 look at the various prize awards that are available in color
3 using the technology of the video screen display. If the
4 prize award comes in sizes, shapes or colors, the player can
5 select the appropriate size, shape or color by merely inter-
6 acting with the video screen display using either the buttons
7 on the button panel of the gaming machine or by using touch
8 screen technology. The player does not have to worry that the
9 gaming casino may be out of stock of the prize award desired
10 by the player and the entire process of redeeming the player's
11 prize award can be a fun, interactive experience. And there
12 is no waiting for the redemption center to open and there is
13 no standing in line at the redemption center.

14 In yet another embodiment of the present invention, a
15 person could access either an actual gaming casino or a
16 virtual gaming casino by means of his personal computer. The
17 person would then log on and play video poker on his personal
18 computer. The functions of the ticket printer which has been
19 incorporated into the gaming machine discussed above would be
20 performed by the printer attached to the person's personal
21 computer. When the player achieves a result that entitles him
22 to a bonus award payout, he can use his personal computer to
23 print out an award slip that he can use to redeem his bonus

1 award. Additionally, there are gaming machines now that
2 accept paper coupons as the equivalent of money with the value
3 of the paper coupon being added to the credit meter of the
4 gaming machine so that these credits can be used to play the
5 gaming machine. The player could print out on his personal
6 computer one or more coupons that could then be used in a
7 gaming machine. Appropriate controls by means of bar codes or
8 other security devices would be used to prevent counterfeit
9 coupons from being printed.

10 If the player had won a keno ticket or a lottery ticket,
11 the player could use his personal computer to print out the
12 keno ticket or the lottery ticket and then the player would
13 take this ticket to a corresponding gaming machine to see if
14 the player had won on this ticket. Again, appropriate
15 controls by means of bar codes or other security devices would
16 be used to prevent counterfeit keno tickets or lottery tickets
17 from being printed. Each participating gaming casino could be
18 outfitted with a ticket reader that would verify the validity
19 of the printed ticket and determine if it was a winning or
20 losing ticket.

21 While the invention has been illustrated with respect to
22 several specific embodiments thereof, these embodiments should
23 be considered as illustrative rather than limiting. Various

1 modifications and additions may be made and will be apparent
2 to those skilled in the art. Accordingly, the invention
3 should not be limited by the foregoing description, but rather
4 should be defined only by the following claims

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